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4/19/02

Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer Information Bureau  
Consumer Complaints  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

Michael A. Stram  
240 Lincoln Oaks Dr.  
Apt. 1505  
Willowbrook, IL 60527  
630-789-8021  
[jgel@ameritech.net](mailto:jgel@ameritech.net)

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies:

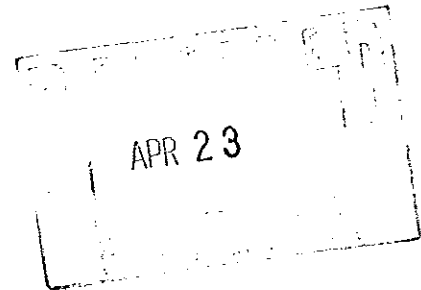
Enclosed you will find our complaint against WLS-TV Channel 7, located at 190 N. State Street in Chicago, Illinois, and the station's response to our complaint. We followed your suggestion and attempted to resolve the issue with the station. Our complaint was sent to Ms. Emily Barr, the Station Manager. The communication was by e-mail at the station's web site. In her e-response, attached, Ms. Barr refused our suggestions to resolve the issue, and made no attempt to find a solution.

Please respond to my address, above, as I am representing the below signed viewers of WLS-TV. Thank you.

Most sincerely,



Michael A. Stram



March 27, 2002

Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer Information Bureau  
Consumer Complaints  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C.

CC: Emily Barr  
Station Manager  
WLS-TV Channel 7  
190 North State Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies:

We the below signed viewers of WLS-TV Channel 7, located at 190 N. State Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60601, wish to complain about this station's repeated broadcasting of gratuitous, actual violent hockey fights, during hours when younger children are likely to see such broadcasting. We believe viewing of such violent acts by children between the ages of 3-10 has a negative impact on their developing personalities, and may make them see violence as a solution to resolving problems. The effect may be immediate or long term.

Several complaints have been made to this station by phone calls and by e-mail messages, in an effort to get them to end their broadcasting of extremely violent professional hockey fighting in their sports news segments. Specifically, this station repeatedly broadcasts violent hockey fights where participants punch each other repeatedly in the face with their bare hands. These fights are not a part of actual competitive play. Such acts if committed off the ice, would be criminal assaults and batteries. It is known that such fights are generally not discouraged by the owners of hockey teams, and for this reason, referees tend not to discourage fights by team members. Hockey fist fighting is common in the sport of professional hockey, and for this reason, it can not be considered news worthy. Other professional sports, such as football, basketball, etc, discourage fighting; therefore fighting during these sports contests would be newsworthy.

This station takes broadcasting of hockey fighting one step further, by presenting it as though it is somehow "cute" and acceptable, even glamorous. A clear example of this kind of presentation can be documented by their presentation by Mr. Mark Giangreco, news reporter, reporting on a hockey fight on March 12, 2002, during their at 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. sports broadcast segments. The reporter gives no warning to the viewing audience and he attempts to treat the violence as though it is humorous. The effect on a child viewing this presentation is the child may conclude that fighting is not wrong to resolve problems, and the child could easily become less sensitive to violence.

At a time when we as a society are trying to teach young minds that violence is not as option to resolving issues, such broadcasting is in direct conflict to this objective. NBC has a corporate broadcast effort ongoing to encourage young people to see that violence should not be an option to resolving issues. On the one hand, we have an admirable effort (by NBC), and then we have stations like WLS-TV encouraging violence as a solution. It is probable that many younger people and some adults are influenced by gratuitous broadcasting of hockey fighting on television, as exemplified by WLS-TV. Recently, there was a murder by a "hockey dad," and his actions may have been influenced by an assumption that violence is acceptable behavior in the sport of hockey, on and off the ice. This assumption is given merit to viewers each time WLS-TV gratuitously broadcasts hockey fist fights, especially with an attempt to make such fights appear as "cute," or acceptable. Younger people, especially may not realize that hockey fighting is used in professional hockey as a promotional tool to create interest in the sport. Younger people, especially children, are impressionable and could come to see this violent behavior as acceptable.

WLS-TV was given an opportunity to respond to our complaint. Ms Emily Barr, the Station President and General Manager rejected our plea to end broadcasting of violent hockey fighting, or to at least give the viewer a warning, so parents could take appropriate measures to protect their children. (Her response by e-mail is attached to this complaint.) Ms. Barr totally disagreed with our contention that broadcasting of violent hockey fighting is inappropriate for viewing by young children, and that it may have an adverse effect on their personalities. Ms. Barr stated, "We believe our viewers understand that our coverage of these issues is not intended to encourage them to engage in similar behavior."

Such a statement is a denial of reality and the results of several studies that show that viewing of tv violence teaches children to behave more violently. A new 17 year study conducted at Columbia University and just completed shows that viewing of tv violence by teens does lead to adult aggression. The study's lead author, Mr. Jeffery Johnson, comments the study, "found a very significant association between tv viewing at age 14 and subsequent serious acts of aggression, like assaults and battery, getting into physical fights, ..... to commit a crime at age 22." (The Study is reported in the Journal of Science on 3/29/02.) The National Institute of Mental Health holds that, "Violent programs on television lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch those programs."

Further, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Psychiatric Association have agreed that "the data point overwhelmingly to a casual connection between media violence and aggressive behavior in some children." It is our belief that viewing of actual violence like hockey fist fighting, not dramatic recreations, is far more associative in its effect, and more dangerous to young people.

We believe the broadcast license granted to WLS-TV does not give that station the right or privilege to offend the community standards and promote violence to young people, as though it is a realistic solution to resolving issues. And their license also should not be a right or privilege to totally ignore potential, adverse effects of their broadcasting on younger people. WLS-TV must agree to a community standard to protect young children against broadcasting of extreme violence like professional hockey fist fighting. WLS-TV can not ignore data that establishes a link between viewing of television violence and its negative impact on children.

We strongly suggest WLS-TV (1) discontinue broadcasting of hockey fights entirely, or (2) broadcasts such fights only after midnight of the day, or (3) announce a warning, either verbally or by printed word on the screen, that the sports segment will contain violence that some viewers may consider objectionable.

WLS-TV has the privilege of entering the homes of millions of families in the Chicago viewing area, and this privilege should come with a requirement to meet an acceptable community standard.

We the below signed request the FCC to review our complaint against WLS-TV, and to assist in finding a solution, by administering one of the suggested solutions we site in this complaint.

Signature	Telephone Number	Address
Michael Stamm	847-831-0932	16839 W. Aptakoc Rd Prairie View, IL 60069
Michael A. Stamm	630-789-8021	240 LINCOLN OAK DR. WILLOW BROOK, IL 60527
Tony Stamm Jr	847-478-9684	Prairie View, IL. 60069
Luci Stamm	847. 478-9684	PRAIRIE VIEW IL. 60069
Angeline Stamm	773-788-1778	Chgo., Ill. 60638
Ted Stamm	630-789-8021	WILLOW BROOK, IL.
H. Harrison	773-585-2625	CHGO IL
Marion Darvey	839 W. 34 <sup>th</sup> St.	Chgo Ill.
Rosemary Donato	3015 S. Normal	chgo 60616
Mark Donato	3015 So Normal	" "
Kay Sark	3012 S. Normal	" "
Matth Wladimov	843 W 34th	Chgo 60608
James Luzzo	247 W 32 <sup>nd</sup> St	Chgo, 60616
John Rogers		3055 S. Lock St 60608
Margaret Baxter		1228 W. 31 <sup>st</sup> St.
Rosemary Hansen		773-585- Chicago.
Rafaela Garza		3034 S. Lock Chgo.
Mary Tasic		1749 W. 21 <sup>st</sup> St. Chgo
Minnie Janeczko		3404 S. May St.
Cecilia Gura	2820 So. Loomis	60608
Irene Gombac		3336 So. May
Mary Fishburn		2861 S. Farnell

Signature

Telephone Number

Address

Helen Marshall  
Josephine Welonski  
Grace J Janik  
Libby Mulfoyle  
Ann Urbonas  
Loretta Kemp  
Bernice Andryke  
Pauline Lucotti  
Mary Bruton  
Bernice Kyprowski  
Grace M Friele  
Esther Van Hecke  
Josephine J Louche  
John A Kozol  
Ann Kozol  
Mary C Manka

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3035 So. Haynes 60608  
3037 S. Haynes Ct 60608  
3027 So. Haynes Ct  
3031 Haynes Ct. 60608  
2521 S. Willock 60608  
2846 Skedey St  
446 21 27th St  
29815 Compton St  
3080 2 Broad St  
3030 S Broad  
3249 So Racine